

In the course of the campaign, I've tried to explain what a faith-based initiative meant to many members of the press that followed me and, of course, many citizens. I'll never forget going to Colfax, Iowa, for a teen challenge program. You know, sometimes people accuse me of not being very articulate. [Laughter] English is my second language. [Laughter] But there was nothing more articulate than seeing a person who had been hooked on serious drugs stand up and explain to the Nation—at least those willing to listen—how he kicked drugs because faith had entered into his life.

It's hard to measure that. There is no formula for that. You can't write a regulation or a bureaucratic rule that suggests that that happened. But what Government can do is recognize its limitations and, more significantly, recognize the power of faith in our society. And that's what this initiative does. We don't pick religions. We don't fund religion. But we welcome the soldiers of the armies of compassion.

And to you soldiers, thank you so much for being here. Thank you for caring about our great land, and thank you for the service you provide on a daily basis.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Dr. Jesse Miranda, president, *Alianza de Ministerios Evangélicos Nacionales* (AMEN), and Rev. Luis Cortes, president, Nueva Esperanza and chairman, National Hispanic Religious Partnership.

Proclamation 7443—National Hurricane Awareness Week, 2001

May 22, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

One of the most dramatic, damaging, and potentially deadly weather events is a hurricane. Each year on average, six hurricanes develop over the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, or Gulf of Mexico. Many of these remain over the ocean with little or no impact on

the continental United States. Unfortunately, though, on average five hurricanes strike the United States coastline every 3 years. These storms can cause significant damage that can cost individuals, businesses, and government billions of dollars. Worst of all, however, is the loss that can never be recovered: human life.

Currently more than 48 million people live along hurricane-prone coastlines in the United States. The growing number of residents living in these areas, as well as the millions of tourists who visit our Nation's beaches annually, has increased the difficulties in evacuating people from areas that are threatened by an impending hurricane. This problem is further compounded by the fact that a large majority of people living in these areas have never experienced the force of a major hurricane and its devastating impact.

Increasingly, many Americans have begun working to ensure that commonsense measures are implemented to protect themselves and their property from natural disasters including floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes. Their foresight, hard work, and respect for the awesome power of nature often yields great benefits for their communities. They are to be commended for this preventive work, and we should learn from their example as we plan for future disasters.

All Americans must be more vigilant about preparing for disasters in advance, rather than just responding to them after they occur. Specific actions can be taken in advance of a storm that will further protect property, help to ensure that businesses are able to resume work quickly after a storm, and ultimately save lives. In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) estimates that for every dollar spent in damage prevention, two are saved in repairs.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) researchers and forecasters continue to improve the accuracy of hurricane warnings that enable residents to evacuate and emergency personnel to effectively respond well in advance of the storm's arrival. In addition, FEMA and NOAA have focused their resources toward encouraging community leaders to work with Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as

volunteer agencies, schools, the private sector, and the news media to collectively undertake activities that diminish the destruction of natural disasters. For hurricane-prone areas, these measures can include residents stockpiling emergency provisions, learning evacuation routes, installing hurricane shutters, building residential safe rooms and community shelters, adopting stronger building codes, and retrofitting existing buildings. These measures have proved effective, and I encourage citizens living in these areas to look for ways that they can better prepare themselves and their communities to reduce the potential devastating impact of these storms.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 20 through May 26, 2001, as National Hurricane Awareness Week. I call upon government agencies, private organizations, schools, news media, and residents in hurricane-prone areas to work towards the prevention of needless storm damage and to join me in raising awareness of the hazards posed by hurricanes.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 23, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 24.

Remarks at a Republican National Committee Gala

May 22, 2001

Thank you all very much. Mr. Vice President, thank you for that kind introduction. Governor Gilmore, thank you very much for agreeing to become the chairman of the Republican Party. Our party will thrive under your leadership, and we appreciate you doing this, sir.

I want to thank all the folks who worked so hard on this dinner tonight—Ann Wagner, Al Hoffman, Jeff and Nancy Marcus from the great State of Texas, all the table chairmen. Thank you so much for your generosity.

I'm honored to be able to say—to introduce the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Denny Hastert. Mr. Speaker, you and your team are doing a fantastic job.

I haven't seen Congressman Armey here, but I know Congressman DeLay is here, as are many other Members of the House of Representatives. I can assure you, knowing that we've got such a fine leadership team and a solid core in the House gives the Vice President and me a lot of comfort. And I can't tell you how joyous it is to work with this fine Speaker and the members of his team.

I would like to have introduced Majority Leader Lott, but he and the other Senators are working as hard as they can to get a meaningful, real tax relief package out of the United States Senate. It is time for the Senate to stop delaying tax relief. It is time to move the package on, for the good of the American people.

I'm so thankful that I did well at the altar. America is better off for it. We've got a fabulous First Lady in Laura Bush.

We came to your dinner last year, and I remember the warm welcome in the middle of a hard-fought campaign. A lot of things have changed since then. Last year I had to fly halfway across the country to get here. Today it took me 5 minutes. *[Laughter]* For another thing, I was running against the Vice President. This time around I brought a fantastic Vice President with me. And of course, it's a great joy to welcome Lynn Cheney, as well. The best decision I made in 2000 was to ask Dick Cheney to be my running mate.

I want to thank you all very much for your generous contributions so that my drive was only 5 minutes. *[Laughter]* I appreciate your support during the campaign, and I appreciate so very much your support to make sure our agenda gets advanced.

As well, there are members of my Cabinet who are here. I'm really proud of the men and women who decided to serve our country. It's a diverse group of folks who are dedicated to one proposition, a hopeful America.